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Letter dated 3 January 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Serbia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the letter from Vojislav Koštunica, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, addressed to you (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex to all Member States as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Pavle **Jevremović**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 3 January 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Serbia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Serbia, I should like to congratulate you wholeheartedly on your election as the new Secretary-General of the United Nations and wish you every success in performing the high and responsible duties that you have just assumed.

I am convinced that at the helm of the United Nations you will enjoy the support of all the Member States of the world Organization in your efforts to achieve its ultimate goal — the maintenance of peace and international order — which directly depends on the observance of the Charter of the United Nations. You can rest assured that the Republic of Serbia will make its full contribution and provide every kind of support to achieve the fundamental objectives that all the freedom-loving and democratic States in the world are committed to.

My country is a free, democratic European State where all democratic values and human and minority rights are respected and where the highest European standards are upheld and implemented. I wish to emphasize in particular that the Republic of Serbia abides unreservedly by all the fundamental United Nations instruments, and its Charter in particular, that it is committed to the basic tenets of international law and to the binding instruments of OSCE, such as the Helsinki Final Act, and, of course, that it is in full compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) concerning the southern Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija.

You are aware that Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) explicitly reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Serbia, stipulating that the province of Kosovo and Metohija should be ensured substantial autonomy within the State of Serbia. Given that more than a year ago the talks on the province's future status started under the auspices of the Security Council, I would like to take this opportunity to briefly inform you of the principled position and arguments of the Government of the Republic of Serbia regarding this issue.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia underscores its full willingness to have the highest level of autonomy ensured for the province of Kosovo and Metohija, based on European practices in democratic States. It is of particular importance to note that such a solution emanates directly from the Charter of the United Nations and is in full harmony with it. At the same time, it is not in violation but in full conformity with the principles of international law on which the present-day international order is based. In other words, we stand ready to talk with the representatives of the Albanian national minority living in Kosovo and Metohija on any model of autonomy in practice in Europe today. The Republic of Serbia is committed and willing to achieve a negotiated agreement on a European model of autonomy for the province of Kosovo and Metohija.

I wish to assure you that the Government of the Republic of Serbia has been demonstrating its full resolve and determination, in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations, to reach a compromise and fair solution, based on an appropriate autonomous status for the province of Kosovo and Metohija, within the State of Serbia. On the other hand, it is clear that the national minorities, including the Albanian minority in Serbia, should not break away a part of the territory of sovereign States in order to form new independent ones. Such a project of the

Albanian separatists undermines the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and violates the basic tenets of international law which represent the cornerstone of the entire international order. Needless to say, any re-charting of borders among States invariably and seriously brings into question stability and peace in the region.

Having in mind that under the Charter of the United Nations all internationally recognized States and United Nations Member States are guaranteed the inviolability of their State borders and sovereignty and territorial integrity, the Government of the Republic of Serbia is hereby requesting explicitly that the principles of the Charter be fully applied to the Republic of Serbia. I am convinced that it remains beyond doubt that it is unacceptable, impermissible and impossible to redraw the Republic of Serbia's internationally recognized borders against its will and to create in 15 per cent of its territory, in addition to the existing one, another Albanian State.

These are the reasons why the Government of the Republic of Serbia is today addressing a request to the United Nations to ensure full protection for Serbia's State borders and to support their inviolability, as well as Serbia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Charter of the United Nations protects the rights and integrity of internationally recognized States in the same way as the Constitution of a democratic State protects the integrity of each and every citizen. Essentially, the value of the Charter is that it is universally applied to all States without exception, and by virtue of this simple principle it has to be applied to the Republic of Serbia as well.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia considers that the talks on the resolution of the autonomous status of the province of Kosovo and Metohija have not so far produced any concrete and welcome results. The very fact that to date only a single meeting between the top-level representatives of the authorities from Belgrade and the representatives of the Albanian national minority in Kosovo and Metohija has taken place clearly indicates that an additional effort is called for and that new energy needs to be generated in order to make headway bringing us closer to an appropriate settlement. The Government of the Republic of Serbia deems it necessary and expects that in the period ahead serious talks will be arranged to determine the future level and form of autonomy for the province of Kosovo and Metohija within the State of the Republic of Serbia. In these talks, the Government and all the representatives of the Republic of Serbia are quite ready to assume their share of responsibility to identify a durable, sustainable and fair compromise solution based on the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law.

My country, its political representatives and I personally will remain at your disposal to provide any kind of support in the endeavours to achieve the settlement on the autonomy of the province of Kosovo and Metohija based on a sound negotiation process, with the prospect of reaching a just settlement for the benefit and welfare of all the citizens of Serbia and the entire region of South-Eastern Europe.

(*Signed*) Vojislav Koštunica
Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia